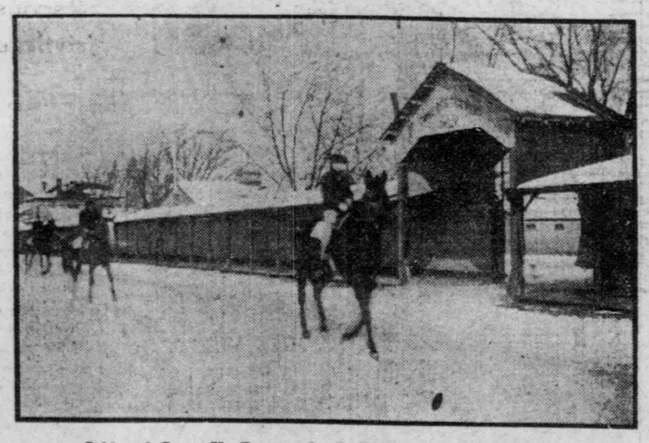
WHAT HAPPENS TO THE THOROUGHBRED IN WINTER AT BENNING

Each Horse Has His Watchful Attendant in Quarters — Regular Program For Each Day—Luxurious Bill of Fare.



Cold and Snow No Bar to the Daily Exercise of Horses.

Untrodden Snow, Brilliantly White, Stretches Over the Many Acres of the Benning Race Track.

Hay Brought From Distant California For These Equine Aristocrats—Odd Mascots of the Stables—Dogs Barred, But in Vain.

Stable Boys Amuse Themselves in Moments of Leisure in Various Ways.

THE Benning racetrack, grandstand, and other buildings at the big course, presented a notable picture last week, clothed as they were in their mantle of deep snow. It was a beautiful picture and one that attracted many visitors from the city on Monday and Tuesday, when the photographs illustrating this article were taken.

Snow Everywhere.

The big grandstand, deserted and bare; the track, covered with wind-swept snow; the infield, where the steeplechase course is buried under its cloak of white so thoroughly that some of the jumps are hardly discernible, and the bleak-looking stable buildings wear an appearance far different from that which marks the grounds of the Washington Jockey Club when a meeting is on.

And yet, to those who are fond of horses and enjoy being with them whether they are on the track or not, there is much that is interesting and even fascinating to be found in a morning's walk through the winter quarters of the handsome thoroughbreds.

The stables themselves, viewed from the outside, have a lonesome appearance, and as one wanders through the yards everything looks quiet and deserted. Once within the big sliding stable doors, however, the scene changes to one of activity. Few living creatures receive the luxurious care that is bestowed upon race horses by good trainers. In nearly every stable there is a man to every horse, and the men are kept busy practically from 7 o'clock in the morning until 8 or 9 o'clock at night caring for the petted darlings of the track. Every good stable has its kitchen and its cook and most of them serve better meals than one gets at an ordinary restaurant. The horses, too, come in for their share of the cooked food, and every night their troughs are filled with hot mash and other cooked stuff.

Daily Routine of Grooms.

Besides the trainer, who is a man of long experience and good judgment, every stable has its head groom, its cleaners and rubbers, and its exercise boys. The daily routine is regular and is strictly adhered to. In most of the stables the men are up at 7 and to breakfast at 7:30. When they finish their breakfast they feed the horses and water them. This takes place about 8 or 8:30. The next thing on the program is cleaning the stalls. Every stall is given a thorough cleaning and the straw bedding is leveled down. The horses are allowed an hour to digest their food and then they are taken out for exercise.

No matter how deep the snow, this exercising is gone through with. At this time every horse does from four to six miles a day, at a walk, a trot, and a canter. The distance done varies according to the horse and his condition and temperament, for no two horses are trained exactly alike. The idea of the winter exercise is to keep the animals in good condition and to harden them by degrees for the spring racing. As the date of the meeting approaches the racers are worked shorter distances in quicker time until they begin hard training for certain races. The tracks and the roads around Benning are used to work the horses on, and the boys who do the exercising are kept under the eye of the trainers all the time.

Hot Food for Supper.

When a horse comes in from his work he is immediately rubbed down by the rubbers who are waiting for him, blanketed, and put back in his stall, while the boy is put up on another horse and sent out. Some of the trainers are about their stables all the time, while others have trusted head grooms in charge and appear on the scene only once a day, or maybe only every other day. The head groom and the rubbers and exercise boys are around the stables all day long. At 11:30 or 12 the second feeding takes place, and at 5:30 or 6 comes the third. At 9 o'clock the hot food is given and the day's work is ended.

Horse Clip for Wool of Man or Beast

The ordinary food consists of hay, corn, and oats, but there are many delicacies on the menu of the race horse that are never heard of in ordinary stables. For instance, several of the trainers who are wintering at Benning are using California hay in small quantities. This hay, which costs $40 a ton in Washington, is quite a delicacy, and is to a horse what certain relishes are to the human bon vivant. This is but one of many expensive luxuries that are on the daily food list of the racer. Once in a while a horse gets "off his feed," and then the trainer has to work up a tempting diet for him, just as the physician does for his whimsical patient. What will put one horse in shape will not do for another, and each individual case must be handled according to its needs.

The life of the grooms and stable boys is not an unpleasant one during the winter season. Like the horses, they are well taken care of. The boys who are apprenticed do not have a great deal of spending money, but they are given their clothes, board, and washing. The rubbers and the grooms are well paid, in addition to receiving their board.

They sleep about the stables, some in regular rooms, and some in box stalls fitted up as rooms and warmed by oil stoves. Following the advice of the advanced school of physicians and health culturists, they adopt the most approved system of sleeping. Their beds are covered with the heaviest and best blankets, and they have plenty of fresh air to breathe.

Their leisure time is spent in argument, repartee of the fish market type, and card playing. An occasional sparring match of a not too scientific sort breaks the monotony. Pinochle is the great game, because a large number of points are quickly made. Payday comes once a month, and for a few days thereafter pinochle receives close attention from all. Even the twelve-year-old exercise boys indulge in the pastime.

"Dogtown," as Benning Station is called by the stable boys, is a great resort with them. There they buy tobacco and other supplies when pay day comes.

"Mascots" Are Many.

Every stable has its mascot, and, notwithstanding the sign which is posted around on the stables, and which reads, "All dogs found running loose will be killed," there are many dogs to be seen around the stables. There are bull terriers, fox terriers, and mongrels of all sorts and descriptions. In one box stall there is a fine litter of black Spanish poodle puppies, whose yelps may be heard all over the grounds. In the stable of J. W. Colt, whose horses are in charge of Gwynn Tompkins, the veteran trainer, the mascot is a Nannie goat. This goat has been in the stable two or three years, and gets along with the horses finely. It is a peculiarity of a horse that no matter how vicious he may be he will never trouble a goat. The goat may come in and out of stalls as much as he pleases without fear of harm.

A Little "Goat-Horseplay."

This particular goat lives in the stalls altogether, enjoying life in her own way, now and then playing with the horses in a most amusing manner. Their play is a game of bite and butt. The horse desires a change of food, and Nannie's ear tempts him. He takes a playful nibble, whereat Nannie, protesting in tones half bleat and half grunt, rears up on her hind legs and butts the horse on the nose. This goes on until the horse gets tired, when he gives Nannie a hard push with his nose and sends her out of the stall flying.

Feeding the Rats.

Even the rats are fed in a racing stable. This, however, is done without special solicitude for the rat's health. Corn is always spread on the floor of an empty stall so the rats can get it with ease. This prevents their going into the loft and eating the oats and cutting into the hay.

ST. VALENTINE THE PATRON OF ALL WHO FEEL THE HURT OF CUPID'S DART

IN 1614 John Donne, a poet and also a dean of St. Paul's, London, apostrophized Bishop Valentine thus:

Hail, Bishop Valentine! whose day is this?
All the air is thy diocese;
And all the chirping choristers
And other birds are thy parishioners.

Valentine, who was beheaded in Rome in the third century, and, being soon canonized, became, by a strange mingling of pagan and Christian rites, the patron saint of lovers, whose red-letter day falls on next Sunday.

The Lupercalia feasts, in honor of Faunus or Lupercus, were heathen celebrations, and it is believed that early Christian teachers, in their endeavors to eradicate the heathen superstitions, substituted the names of particular saints for the especial festival days of more ancient pagan observance. As the feasts of Lupercalia were celebrated in the middle of February, the 14th of February was selected as the day of honor for St. Valentine. On these saints' days the outlines of some of the pagan ceremonies were preserved, which in a modified form were adopted by the Christian world for centuries.

A Good Old Saint.

An old writer says: "St. Valentine was a man of most admirable parts, and so famous for his love and charity that the Valentine festival took its rise from that."

Misson, who in 1698 published "Travels in England," wrote: "On the eve of St. Valentine's day the young folks in England and Scotland, by a very ancient custom, celebrate a little festival. An equal number of maids and bachelors write their true or feint name upon separate billets, which they roll up and draw by way of lots, the maids taking the men's billets and men the maids'; so that each of the young men lights upon a young girl that he calls his valentine, and each of the young girls upon a young man that she calls hers. By this means each has two valentines; but the man clings to the valentine that has fallen to his lot rather than the one who calls him hers. Fortune having thus divided the company into so many couples, the valentines give balls and treats, wear their billets several days upon their sleeves, and this little sport often ends in love."

Casting Lots for Their Valentines.

To cast lots for a valentine as described was a practice followed until the eighteenth century by the gentry of England; it became obligatory upon the man to remain the devoted attendant of his enslaver through the ensuing year, and a present was to be given at once to the choosing party. As this necessity of devotion and gift-making was often onerous, particularly if one or both of the parties were married, it became the custom to bestow a handsome gift, which released the valentine from obligatory attentions. In Pepys' Diary the following account concerning the subject may be found:

"Valentine's Day, 1667.—This morning came up to my wife's bedside little Will Mercer to be her valentine, and brought her name written in gold letters upon blue paper, done by himself, very pretty; and we were both well pleased with it. But I am also my wife's valentine, and it will cost me £5; but that I must have laid out if we had not been valentines."

On the 16th he writes: "I find that Mrs. Pierce's little girl is my valentine, she having drawn me, which I was not sorry for, it easing me of something more that I must have given to others. It is also the fashion to draw mottoes, as well as names, so that Pierce, who drew my wife, did also a motto, and the little girl drew one for me. What mine was I forgot; but my wife's was 'Most courteous and most fair.'"

Duke of York's Expensive Valentine.

At a later date he wrote of a famous Miss Stuart, who became the Duchess of Richmond: "The Duke of York, being once her valentine, did give her a jewel of about £800; and my Lord Mandeville, her valentine this year, a ring of about £200."

Pepys neglects to mention his present to "Mrs. Pierce's little girl," though he enlarges upon the gifts he and his wife received: "This evening my wife did with great pleasure show me her stock of jewels, increased by the ring she hath made lately, as my Valentine's gift this year, a Turkey-stone set with diamonds. With this and what she had, she reckons that she hath above one hundred and fifty pounds' worth of jewels of one kind or other; and I am glad of it, for it is fit the wretch should have something to content herself with." The word "wretch" as here used, does not imply that Mrs. Pepys was a wretched woman, but was rather a term of endearment.

The Poets' Tributes.

Shakespeare as well as Chaucer, Donne, Drayton, Lydgate, and other poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, allude to this festal day. In one of Gray's poems he mentions the fact of the current belief that the first unmarried person of the other sex whom one met on St. Valentine's Day under any circumstances, but particularly when walking out, was destined to be a wife or husband. Gray makes a country dame say:

Thee first I spied, and the first swain we see,
In spite of fortune shall our true love be.

Among the great variety of occult devices practiced on the eve of St. Valentine's Day was one which was sufficiently heroic to deserve a favorable response. The anxious maiden must secure five bay leaves, pin one to each corner of the pillow, and the fifth in the middle, and then the man of whom she dreamed would assuredly marry her before the year closed. But if she wished to make assurance doubly sure there was virtue in boiling an egg hard, removing the yolk, and filling the cavity with salt; this was to be eaten just on going to bed, salt, shell and all, without speaking or drinking after it.

By Edgar Allan Poe.

A quaint and singular poem by Edgar Allan Poe, entitled "Valentine," and dedicated to Frances Sargent Osgood, is worthy of reproduction; to obtain the sense and meaning of the poem, the first letter of the first line in connection with the second letter of the second line, the third letter of the third line, the fourth letter of the fourth, and so on to the last, should be read. The name Frances Sargent Osgood will then be found. Following is the poem:

For her this rhyme is penned, whose luminous eyes
Brightly expressive as the twins of Loeda,
Shall find her own sweet name, that, nestling, lies
Upon the page, enwrapped from every reader.
Search narrowly the line! they hold a treasure
Divine—a talisman—an amulet
That must be worn at heart. Search well the measure—
The words—the syllables! Do not forget
The trivialest point, or you may lose your labor!
And yet there is in this no Gordian knot
Which one might not undo without a sabre,
If one could merely comprehend the plot.
Enwritten upon the leaf where now are peering
Eyes scintillating soul, there lies perdu
Three eloquent words oft uttered in the hearing
Of poets, by poets, as the name is a poet's too.
Its letters, although naturally lying
Like the knight Pinto-Mendes Fernando—
Still form a synonym for Truth. Cease trying!
You will not read the riddle, though you do
the best you can do.

Shakespeare to Anne Hathaway.

Though St. Valntine in the calendar of love has had his votaries in every age and clime, no devotee has sung in sweeter strains than Shakespeare, in the following stanzas accredited to him, and intended for Anne Hathaway:

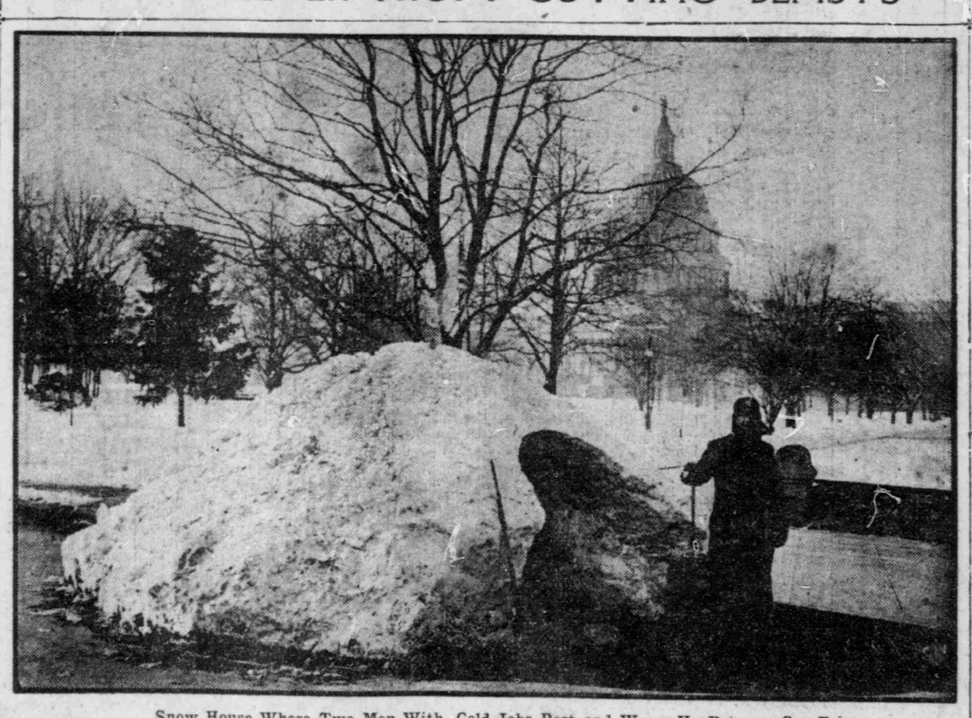
Is there in heavenne aught more rare
Than thou, sweete nymphe of Avon fayre,
Is there onne earthe a manne more trewe
Than Willy Shakespeare is toe you?
Though fickle fortune prove unkynde,
Still doth she leave herre wealth behynde,
She ne'ere the heart canne forme anew,
Nor make thy Willy's love unnetrewe.
Though age with withered hand doe stryke
The form most fayre, the face most bryghte,
Still dothe she leave untouched and trewe
Thy Willy's love anne freynshyppe too.
Though death with neverre fayling blowe
Doth manne and babe alyke brynge lowe,
Yefte doth he take naughte but his dewe
And strykes notte Willy's hearte still trewe.
Synce thenne notte fortune, death, nor age
Canne faythfull Willy's love asswage
Thenne doe I live and dye forre you
Thy Willy syncere and most trewe.

The origin of legends and superstition is credited by I. D'Israeli to have been as follows: "Before colleges were established, in the monasteries where the schools were held," argues this eminent writer, "the professors in rhetoric frequently gave their pupils the life of some saint for a trial of their talent at amplification. The students, being constantly at a loss to furnish out their pages, invented most of these wonderful adventures. Jortin observes that the Christians used to collect out of Ovid, Livy, and other pagan poets and historians the miracles and portents to be found there, and accommodated them to their own monks and saints. The good fathers of that age, whose simplicity was not inferior to their devotion, were so delighted with these flowers of rhetoric that they were induced to make a collection of these miraculous compositions, not imagining that, at some distant period, they would become matters of faith.

"Voluminous Absurdities."

"Yet, when James de Voragine, Peter Nadal, and Peter Ribadeneira wrote the lives of the saints, they sought for their materials in the libraries of the monasteries; and, awakening from the dust these manuscripts of amplification, imagined they made an invaluable present to the world, by laying before them these voluminous absurdities. The people," continues D'Israeli, "received these pious fictions with all imaginable simplicity, and as the book is adorned with a number of cuts these miracles were perfectly intelligible to their eyes. * * * Baronious has given the lives of many apocryphal saints; for instance, of a St. Xinoris, whom he calls a martyr of Antioch; but it appears that Baronious, having read in Chrysotom this word, which signifies a couple, or pair, he mistook it for the name of a saint, and contrived to give the utmost authentic biography of a saint who never existed. The lives of the saints by Alban Butler is a learned work, and the most sensible history of these legends; Ribadeneira's lives of the saints exhibit more of the legendary spirit, for, wanting judgment and not faith, he is more voluminous in his details, and more ridiculous in his narratives."

FIND SHELTER FROM CUTTING BLASTS



Snow House Where Two Men With Cold Jobs Rest and Warm Up Between Car Trips.

A GOOD way to keep warm during the coldest days of last week was found by Charles K. Allen and Albert Weddell, who tend the street railway switch at the corner of First and B Streets northeast. While several inches of snow were on the ground they used their shovels to excellent advantage and built a snug little snow house. Allen is on duty from 5 a. m. to 3 p. m., and Weddell from 3 p. m. to 1 a. m. Each one put in the time between the arrival of the cars in throwing all the snow within the radius of thirty feet into a mound. When their mound grew to be five feet eight or nine feet high and twenty-five feet in circumference and was well packed down, they began excavating one side of it.

Soon they had a hole about four feet high and three feet wide, running back six or seven feet. In this they cut a place for their bench and a shelf for their lunch baskets. On the top of the mound they stuck an American flag, and their castle was complete.

It took them about six hours to do the work.

"That's a great house," said Allen to a reporter for The Sunday Times. "You might not think it, but when the wind is blowing it is as warm as it can be. You see the opening faces west, so we can sit in there and see a car coming in plenty of time to change the switch before it gets to us. It is particularly fine at night, when there is no sun to help us keep warm."

The switchmen have numbers of visitors every day who come to examine their little retreat, and many are the expressions of praise for the architectural beauty of the snow palace.

PRINCE PAYS BIG PRICE FOR RARE STAMP

THE Prince of Wales paid $7,250 the other day for a postage stamp which cost originally only 4 cents. The stamp is a two-penny blue issued by the island of Mauritius in September, 1847. Owing to the engraver's mistake in the issue the words "post office" were printed in the left border of the stamp instead of "post paid." By May, 1848, the error had been corrected, but about 1,000 of the "post office" stamps had been circulated, all but about twenty of which have now disappeared. Hence the great value of this specimen.

Forty years ago James Bonar, who lives in Hampstead, a London suburb, was a youthful stamp collector with all the enthusiasm boys put into the hobby. By a "trade" with another youngster he secured the two-penny Mauritius, and ever since that time it has been forgotten. A short time ago a woman acquaintance, a philatelic enthusiast, happened to call on Mr. Bonar, who resurrected his old stamp albums for her inspection. As they turned the pages the caller suddenly exclaimed:

"Why, here's a 'post office' Mauritius! It's worth a fortune."

Mr. Bonar showed the stamp to several dealers and expert collectors, so the news of his find soon became noised abroad, and within a few days he received an offer of $5,000 for it. This he declined, and then turned the stamp over to an auction firm, who advertised it for public sale. Some 600 dealers and collectors were in the room when the sale opened. From an initial bid of $2,500 the price quickly rose to $7,250, the amount which closed the bidding.

Although the purchaser, who gave his name as Crawford, did not say that his principal was the Prince of Wales, it is understood on trustworthy authority that such is the case. His royal highness is the president of the London Philatelic Society and one of the most enthusiastic collectors in Great Britain. The Mauritius stamp bears none of the original gum, but it never has been used and is in excellent condition.

The specimen was the first ever sold by the auction firm. Another company in London, however, bought a similar stamp with a 1-penny red of the same issue of 1847 about ten years ago for $3,400, later selling them for $3,750. Within a year of the sale the same company advertised for these stamps, offering $7,500 for them. The stamps did not come back, and, so far as known, not a single specimen of this issue has changed hands in London since that time.

The famous Tapling collection, now in the British Museum, contains both the 1 and the 2 penny variety. Two copies of each value are also in the famous Ferrary collection at Paris, and these will pass into the possession of the Louvre when their owner dies. Eight more of the precious stamps are in England, nine in France, and one in Russia.